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**United States Patent** [19][11] **Patent Number:** 5,353,335

D'Urso et al.

[45] **Date of Patent:** Oct. 4, 1994[54] **MULTILINGUAL PREPAID TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

[75] **Inventors:** Anthony D. D'Urso, Long Valley; Orlando S. King, Edison; Arthur G. Martin, Bernardsville; Christine P. Peterson, Fords; David G. Unger, Morristown, all of N.J.

[73] **Assignee:** AT&T Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, N.J.

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[58] **Field of Search** ..... 379/155, 88, 143, 154, 379/144, 112, 114, 126, 121, 123

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*Primary Examiner*—James L. Dwyer

*Assistant Examiner*—Michael Lau

*Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Eugene S. Indyk

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A prepaid telephone system having multilingual capabilities is provided in a public switched telephone network. A telephone user buys a predetermined amount of service beforehand and receives a card imprinted with a unique account number. A plurality of toll free access telephone numbers allows the user to access the prepaid telephone system. Each of those telephone numbers causes the prepaid system to interact with the user in the language in which he or she wishes the system to operate. The user is prompted in the chosen language to enter his or her card number. The authenticity of the number and the available credit is determined. If there is a certain minimum amount of credit available, the user is prompted to enter the phone number of a desired party. The user may also dial a speed dialing alias which connects the user to special services including news, weather, travel, translation, and other services. If the user has enough available credit to pay for at least a minimal amount of calling time, the call is completed. A timer is set with an amount of calling time permitted by the available balance. The timer runs during the course of the phone call and the call is disconnected when the timer runs out. If the call is ended prior to the timer running out, a new available balance is computed in light of the time remaining on the timer. The user can make additional phone calls using the new available credit balance.

34 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets

